



MEDIA RELEASE | WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL

DOCTORS IN GRENFELL

Weddin Shire Council, Main Street Medical Centre and the Rural Doctor Network (RDN) are working in partnership to collectively help resolve the doctor shortages in Grenfell and the Weddin Shire. Council received notification that the Weddin Street Clinic (MedCIRC) have closed their doors, which has added to the pressure and urgency to look for more doctor choices in Grenfell.

The Main Street Medical Centre includes Dr Patrick Akhiwu, and Dr Claire Cupitt who visits the centre once a month for one week at a time. Dr Patrick immediately contacted the Rural Doctors Network to seek assistance regarding temporary staffing to support with the transitional period. Together with RDN, Dr Patrick is also proactively looking for a permanent doctor to join him at the Main Street Medical Centre.

A meeting was held between Weddin Shire Council and RDN, to understand where RDN can provide assistance to our community on the appointment of a permanent GP, including relocation grants and other subsidies that could be offered. In the interim, locum subsidies to provide temporary relief have been offered by RDN.

Dr Patrick believes that Grenfell has much to offer for any doctor who is looking to relocate. "The Main Street Medical Centre is a new facility boasting five consult rooms, modern telehealth and conferencing room and modern amenities".

Dr Patrick has been living and working in Grenfell for over ten years and enjoyed the diversity of work and the proximity of Grenfell to other locations. "Grenfell is my home, since moving here with my beautiful wife Elizabeth and our four children, we have been able to raise our family here with the most welcoming community".

The Mayor, Craig Bembrick has expressed his concerns about the closure of the Weddin Street Clinic, however acknowledges that the community's wish was for a new medical facility with multiple doctors. "I am prepared to visit any ministers to advocate for the need to improve rural and regional health outcomes for our community. I have continually written to the State and Federal Ministers regarding better rural and regional health outcomes and flagged GP access issues to them. The Shire identified a need to build the new facility which included a special rate variation at the time for Council to take out a loan to construct the facility. Council at the time identified the need due to the lack of action by the State and Federal Governments. I will be working collaboratively with Dr Patrick and RDN to look for a new doctor to join the Main Street Medical Centre".

Updates regarding the better outcomes for our community will be provided once we know more.

Noreen Vu
GENERAL MANAGER
1 March 2024